

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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World's people need bailout

People's Economic Summit set for May 31

By John Catalinotto
New York

In solidarity with an international conference called by formerly colonized countries at the United Nations here in New York, the Bail Out the People Movement has called for a People's Economic Summit on May 31.

BOPM organizers say that because it comes on the eve of an international conference, the People's Summit provides a unique opportunity to project a working-class agenda on an international arena. It is an equally important opportunity to express international solidarity with the most oppressed of the world.

President of the General Assembly Miguel D'Escoto Brockman of Nicaragua first issued the call for a June 1-3 U.N. Conference on the World Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. This conference is also known as the G-192 because it is meant to represent all countries, not just the imperialist countries of the G-7 or the economic powers called the G-20.

Since all U.N. members have been invited, this conference could for the first time give an opportunity for those who represent the world's poorest and most vulnerable people—those who are suffering the most but who are least responsible for the crisis—to express their peoples' needs to the world.

Hostility from the big imperialist countries to such an inclusive conference has made it necessary to mobilize public support worldwide to assure it is a success.

Representing progressive organizations in the U.S., BOPM has organized workshops and rallies at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza at 47th Street and First Avenue in Manhattan for May 31, starting at 11 a.m. Activists will present ways for workers and other poor people to confront the challenges of the capitalist economic crisis.

BOPM is a national network of labor and community activists who have challenged the Wall Street banks in the streets and stopped evictions in neighborhoods in Detroit, Baltimore, Boston and Southern California.

BOPM's Larry Holmes, one of the coordinators of the People's Summit, told Workers World: "It will give an opportunity for workers and oppressed peoples here to make their voices heard and their demands against banks and international financial institutions known around the world. The administration has pledged \$12 trillion to the banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions, yet there is no bailout for working people in the U.S. Two million people are expected to lose homes here this year, and there have already been about six million layoffs since the downturn began.

"That's bad enough, but conditions are far worse through what the politicians call 'the developing world,' meaning the former colonies that are still economically subject to the decisions of the big powers," Holmes continued. "The International Monetary Fund and World Bank's policies have pushed privatizing, ending subsidies for food and other basic necessities in these countries, stopping funding of public health and opening their economies to the world market, which can impoverish them."

Plan to confront G-20 in September

"The word now is that the G-20 plans its next meeting in New York around Sept. 19 and 20 to coincide with the U.N. opening meetings," said Holmes. "One thing we'll take up May 31 is our plan for reacting to this G-20. We will go over different strategies and tactics for this. We plan a fightback. As we say in our literature, 'A new world is urgently needed, but we must fight for it.'"

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Boston Community Summit vs. school resegregation



Miya Campbell of Boston FIST and the Women's Fightback Network. See page 3.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

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Personal or political?

U.S. soldier kills five troops in Iraq

By Larry Hales

U.S. Army Sgt. John Russell shot to death five U.S. troops on May 11 at Camp Liberty, one of the largest U.S. installations in Iraq. This act put into focus the relationship of the personal to the political in a war zone.

Russell, a 44-year-old electronics technician with the 54th Engineer Battalion, had been at the so-called Combat Stress Control Center. According to news reports, he argued with staff there and was then taken outside by an armed escort.

According to these reports, Russell commandeered the escort's weapon and ordered him out of the jeep they were in, then drove back to the Center, where he fatally shot two officers working there—an Army psychiatrist and a Navy social worker—as well as three enlisted persons.

Russell had earlier been stripped of his weapon and ordered to the Combat Stress Control Center by his commanding officer. He was on his third tour in Iraq and due to leave in six weeks.

He had been on active duty since 1994 after having enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1988. Before Russell's three tours in Iraq, he took part in the U.S. occupations of Kosovo—at that time a province of Serbia—and Bosnia.

According to Russell's father, Wilburn Russell, John was threatened and reprimanded by his superior and believed that he was going to be discharged from the military. He risked losing not only his steady income, but his pension as well. John Russell owed heavily for a home he had just had built. (New York Times, May 13)

Wilburn Russell says John told his wife, "My life is over. To hell with it. I'm going to get even with 'em."

'They broke him'

In an interview Wilburn Russell said, "If a guy actually goes to the clinic and asks for help, they think of him as a wimp and he's got something wrong with him and try to get rid of him. Well, he didn't go and ask voluntarily for help. They scheduled him in, and they set him up. They drove him out. They wanted to put as much pressure on him as they could to drum him out. They broke him." (Times)

The initial accounts of the shootings described the incident as a case of "fragging." "Fragging" technically means killing with a fragmentation grenade. Starting in 1969, angry U.S. enlisted soldiers in Vietnam committed "fraggings" when they killed officers or noncommissioned officers who had given them a hard time, ordered them into combat against their will, given unreasonable orders in the field or were responsible for mistakes of leadership that led to soldiers being killed. The term grew to include all similar killings, whatever the weapon.

Historian Terry Anderson of Texas A&M University says of fragging during the Vietnam War that the U.S. Army knew that at least 600 officers and noncoms were killed this way, "and then they have another 1,400 that died mysteriously. Consequently by early 1970, the Army [was] at war not with the enemy but with itself."

Few eras in the history of worldwide class struggle have been as rife with revolutionary ardor as the period from the late 1950s to the mid 1970s. During the U.S. occupation of Vietnam, national liberation movements in the Third World raged on just as national liberation

movements were being fought inside the imperialist U.S. This had a political impact on the GIs.

The current period is quite different. But it is also an era of profound crisis in the system, one that has already bled almost six million jobs in the U.S. alone. Though Russell's act may not have been overtly political, it developed in a specific context of his legitimate fear of being thrown out of the military and labeled with emotional or mental disability at a time when finding employment is extremely difficult. His act may be best described as "fragging redux."

Hasan Akbar, a Black man and a Muslim, carried out a more consciously political fragging when he rolled grenades into command tents in March 2003 before the invasion of Iraq began. Akbar said he opposed the war and feared for his life because of bias against his religious beliefs and because he was a Black man who had faced the racist conditions of everyday U.S. life.

Akbar refused to kill fellow Muslims and heroically turned his weapons against his superiors. He has since been sentenced to death.

A new era of crisis

While the stress on U.S. occupation troops pales in comparison with the stress on the occupied peoples, still, anyone organizing against the wars must take into consideration the impact on the U.S. troops. The military has long been one of the few ways out of unemployment for workers, especially those from oppressed nationalities who face much higher unemployment rates. The twin wars in Iraq and Afghanistan mean that soldiers are on constant rotation.

Already 1.7 million people in the military have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, with many having served two to three tours of a year or longer in a war zone.

According to the RAND Corporation, a military think tank, at least one in five troops who have been in Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from post traumatic stress disorder or depression. In 2008, 169 active-duty troops committed suicide.

At the same time, a worldwide movement is burgeoning again in response to imperialist globalization. The movement for socialism is once again a rising specter alongside movements for national liberation.

While the U.S. wages two imperialist wars and threatens another in Pakistan, more soldiers may be driven over the edge. Russell's act, as personal as it seems, is connected to the U.S. tenuous grip on the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and the toll the resistance in both countries is taking on U.S. soldiers, along with the unending uncertainty of the capitalist crisis. □

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Community summit says NO to racist school resegregation

By Frank Neisser
Boston

About 200 parents, teachers, students and community activists participated in a spirited community summit at Roxbury Community College in Boston May 14. They said no to Mayor Thomas Menino and the Boston School Committee's racist plan to return the city to segregated, "neighborhood" schools.

The event was chaired by Sandra McIntosh of Work for Quality, Fight for Equity (WQFE). Jose Lopez of the newly-formed Coalition for Equal Quality Education (CEQE) gave a graphic presentation of "before and after" maps showing how the new five-zone assignment plan would limit parents' and students' access to quality schools and programs. He cited figures showing that 58 percent of the schools in the zones including the African-American community were listed as underperforming, compared to only 16 percent of the schools in the majority-white Allston-Brighton neighborhood's zone.

City Councilor Chuck Turner cited a community victory in a similar mobilization in 2004, when Menino last launched a "task force" to revise student assignment and transportation plans to return to neighborhood schools. At that time, parents packed a community meeting at a Roxbury church and made it completely clear to the City Council, School Committee and the mayor that the plan was unacceptable as long as there were no quality schools available in the communities of color. The mayor and School Committee agreed then that there would be no change in the student assignment plan until the issues of equity and of quality schools in all communities were addressed.

It is now five years later and nothing has been done.

Miriam Ortiz of the Boston Parents Organizing Network explained at the May 14 summit how the plan would deprive special education students of access to inclusion programs they need. The plan would also leave East Boston, the neighborhood with the largest Latina/o student population, without access to any two-way bilingual program.

Mary Jo Hetzel of WQFE accused the mayor of using the budget crisis as a pretext to push his racist political agenda of a return to "neighborhood schools."

Nora Toney of Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM) spoke of the history of the struggle for access to quality educational programs for the Black community, going back to the founding of BEAM in 1966.

City Councilor Charles Yancey rallied the crowd, saying, "We can't turn back. We won't go back to racist resegregation of the Boston schools." City Councilor Sam Yoon, a mayoral candidate, also spoke against the five-zone plan.

A wide array of parents, teachers and students participated in the open discussion, including parents and teachers from the Hernandez School. This is currently a citywide school with a very successful two-way bilingual program. Under the new plan—which would only allow students in the zone to access it—over 55 percent of those who access the school today would no longer be eligible for transportation to the school, and no new students outside the zone could apply.

Kervin Voyard, leader of Powerful Students at the Community Academy of Science and Health (CASH), described the students' walkout and demonstration at school headquarters in early May to save teachers at their school from being laid off and to fight for equal, fair treatment for Haitian students.

Andre Francois of Boston School Bus



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, said this coalition was the beginning of the fightback against racism and bigotry in the city, and called on all to take it to the streets. The union had contributed to the struggle by printing thousands of May 14 flyers and distributing them to the students on buses to bring to their parents. The union, which includes a large number of Haitian drivers, provided translation for a sizeable group of Haitian parents who attended the May 14 summit.

The event was organized by the CEQE, including BEAM; Work 4 Quality, Fight for Equity; Boston Parents Organizing Network; Boston School Bus Drivers; Chuck Turner and Charles Yancey; Minister Don Muhammad, Nation of Islam; Bail Out the People Movement; Women's Fightback Network; New England Human Rights for Haiti; Bishop Felipe Teixeira, OFSJC; Community Change; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth; the

Powerful Students of CASH; and Union of Minority Neighborhoods.

The coalition called on everyone to march with the Hernandez parents, teachers and students on May 18, and to demonstrate at the School Committee headquarters at 26 Court St. in Boston at 5:30 p.m. on June 3, when the superintendent will present the final recommendation on the five-zone plan.

Boston has been a battleground against racism in the schools since 1974, when African-American parents demanded equal education 20 years after the Supreme Court ruled segregation unconstitutional. It took a mass march of 25,000 against racism in Boston on Dec. 14, 1974, to turn the corner against the racist attacks on school buses transporting African-American students to schools in predominantly white neighborhoods. Activists see the need to take it to the streets again to prevent a return to the racist, bigoted past.

From Texas death row

A review of Mumia's new book

By Harvey "Tee" Earvin
Polunsky Unit, Livingston, Texas

"Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the USA" by Mumia Abu-Jamal, City Lights Publishers, 2009; order from www.leftbooks.com.

"Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the USA." Wow! Before I say what it is, let me say where it belongs: right next to Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States."

Like all societies, U.S. prison houses have a beginning. They have a history. And, as has been written, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle."

This is our struggle, our history, written by one of our very own, from our perspective, a prisoner's perspective.

The prisoner's struggle is a human struggle that has yet to be recognized as such. Save for the most politicized segment of nominally free society, prisoners have had to go it alone, suffering, sometimes dying, without anyone to turn to but ourselves.

What we, the dispossessed, have most needed—lawyers, writers, poets, organizers, educators—have largely come from us. Forged out of struggle, we are the products of state oppression.



Harvey 'Tee' Earvin

Mumia Abu-Jamal says it best in his conclusion, the "Afterword." We are "men and women, often self-taught, [who] have developed a tradition of selfless service and in some cases excellence, to serve the needs of society's dispossessed."

Yes, "Jailhouse Lawyers" is our story, the testimonies of many, told to our greatest voice, our best and most prolific writer. These voices refute that "History is the memory of states," as maintained

by Henry Kissinger in his book, "A World Restored." No, that memory, that propaganda, is state repression. Lies intended to kill and to bury. But here, in "Jailhouse Lawyers," in the testimonies of revolutionary resistance, we rise in that beautiful, victorious way described by distinguished poet Maya Angelou:

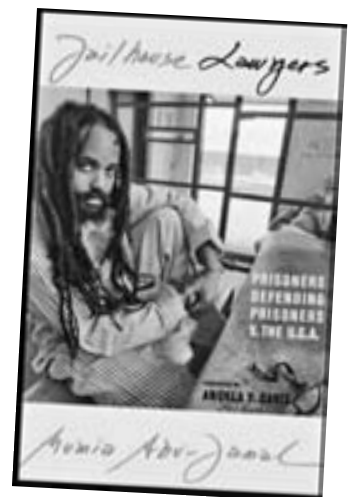
You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

The book begins with a lively interview by Mumia of a Philadelphia prisoner, Delbert Africa, years before Mumia himself became a prisoner. Africa is trying with his best effort to get a less-than-informed Mumia to see and understand how some prisoners come into the system, study the law for years believing that there is justice in it—that it is fixed by precedents and thus applies equally to all, favoring neither rich nor poor—only to discover a most shocking truth, a truth oftentimes too much to handle.

"Them dudes get in there, read all them law books, and before you know it, they be crazy as hell!" Delbert Africa argues.

"What do you mean crazy?" Mumia asks.

"Well, they may not be crazy when they get here, but after a few months of reading



Mumia's new book "Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v. the USA" is available at leftbooks.com

that shit, they go down to City Hall, and when they see that them folks down there in City Hall, in the System, don't really go by that so-called law, well!—it plumb drives them dudes crazy!"

"Yeah, man, but why it drives 'em dudes crazy?" Mumia presses, still not understanding.

"Cuz they can't believe that the system don't follow their own laws."

What Mumia could not conceive of then, he would bear witness to later, perhaps still, to some extent, disbelieving his own eyes. After all, this is America, is it not? Where life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are supposedly inviolable rights; where none stand at risk of losing life, lib-

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Fired workers keep up organizing drive

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson

Lucia Paz spent the last 17 years working for the Food City division of Bashas’ grocery store chain in Tucson. During that time, she diligently performed her job duties: stocking shelves, running the cash register and assisting customers. She was a conscientious worker and was never considered a “troublemaker.” On May 11 Paz was terminated for “failing to follow policy and procedures.” What she failed to follow was never revealed to her, and Bashas’/Food City management refused to comment on the reasons for the firing, even to the mainstream media.

Grace Mercado worked for 13 years at the same store as Lucia Paz, and on May 11 she also received a termination notice from Food City. She too had failed to follow some un-named policy and procedure.

What these two brave Latina women were doing was talking to workers and organizing a union at Food City. They are convinced they were fired for failing to follow the chain’s unspoken “anti-union policy.” They spoke to other workers at the store and to hundreds of people gathered at the Tucson May Day rally about their struggle to form a union. They brought in representatives from the Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) to help them organize, and they exposed the abusive conditions at Bashas’ Food City stores.

Paz explained to this reporter that when she started 17 years ago, the store was a Bashas’ supermarket, but in 2006, Bashas’ management decided to abandon their stores in poor and oppressed neighborhoods and changed the name from Bashas’ to Food City, while building new Bashas’ supermarkets in more afflu-



Grace Mercado, Lucia Paz and Frances Hernandez. Mercado and Paz say they were fired for trying to organize a union.

ent neighborhoods. The new Bashas’ had Starbucks cafes, sit-down dining areas and other amenities to cater to the more privileged neighborhoods.

The Food City stores, on the other hand, received no improvements and the quality of produce and meat for their customers, mostly Latina/os and other people of color, was of poor quality and not “fit for sale in a Bashas’.”

Paz further explained that when the new Bashas’ stores were opened in 2006, she and many others applied to be transferred to them. It turned out that all the Latina/o workers who applied were denied transfer and individually told they

were “better suited to work at Food City.” White workers were granted transfers and moved to the new stores. It was this injustice that made Paz and Mercado decide to contact UFCW.

The Bashas’/Food City management responded with an anti-union campaign, stooping so low as to accuse workers of theft and then posting the workers’ pictures in areas where the workers congregated with a caption that read: “This is your union organizer—a Thief!”

The company recently implemented a two-tier wage system with new hires’ wages ranging from \$8 to \$11 an hour, while longer-working employees make

more than \$15 an hour. Now the company is using the economic crisis as a pretext to cut the hours of first-tier employees, often cutting their hours enough to deny them medical and other benefits—since they no longer qualify as full-time workers. New Bashas’ stores are still being built, however, while Food City stores are being neglected and their workers pushed toward lower wages.

On May 13, after learning of Paz’s and Mercado’s terminations, the Tucson May 1st Coalition and UFCW organized a militant, well-attended rally in front of the Food City store where the two had worked. Many of those who participated, some of whom are current employees of Food City, vowed to continue the struggle to form a union.

Amy Gellatly, a UFCW organizer who has been working with the Food City employees, explained how the situation at Food City relates to passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. “Even though they have the right to form a union,” Gellatly explained, “workers take a real risk when they speak out, and it shouldn’t have to be like that. Workers should not have to be afraid of losing their job just because they were trying to exercise a basic right—the right to organize.

“The fact that Lucia and Grace have lost their jobs over this right shows just how important it is to reform labor laws in this country. With the Employee Free Choice Act, workers get a fair and direct path to form unions through majority sign-up; they can secure a contract with their employer in a reasonable period of time; and the law gives tougher penalties to employers who violate workers’ rights,” said Gellatly. “In this case we wouldn’t have to worry about employers trying to scare people away from the union or getting rid of strong supporters.”□

Auto barons slash more jobs

Continued from page 1

contract it would have to give the dealer several months to wind down its business, offer to buy back vehicle and parts inventory and, in some cases, offer reimbursement for a number of costs, such as remodeling.”

Thus Chrysler is asking U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Arthur Gonzalez to rule that federal bankruptcy law supersedes these state laws.

Furthermore, stated the Free Press, “Any payments or damages from ending the contract would be left with the ‘old’ Chrysler whose liquidation won’t cover the liabilities it assumes.”

This is the same process by which Chrysler is selling eight plants and cutting over 5,000 jobs. Why is Chrysler taking a total of 45,000 jobs out of the economy? To emerge from bankruptcy, the “New Chrysler” must raise \$2.3 billion to erase its debt with secured creditors. The four largest of these—JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs—have so far collected over \$95 billion in government bailout money.

Many of these dealerships have been in the family for three and four generations, and their customers have been with them almost as long. In many showrooms the tears began to flow as UPS delivered the bad news.

Now Chrysler dealers are scrambling to find customers for their inventory and to get other franchises to buy up what they don’t sell. Because they purchase products in advance with borrowed funds,

they must sell all their stock and sell it above cost to make up for the interest paid. Come June 10, many will be without a source of income and mired in debts. Where will they find work? What will the salespeople do for work?

Mechanics are highly skilled. Many began their careers as adolescents; fixing cars is all they know. Like the glass cutters at Waterford Crystal in Ireland, they have only one trade to sell. Where will all of them find work?

People will still need to get their cars repaired. Mechanics at the remaining shops will have to pick up the slack by working longer and harder. How many will be injured, even fatally, as a result?

In Ohio and Michigan, where Chrysler is closing some 80 shops, auto companies have driven unemployment rates to well above average. Auto parts supplier firms are going under. Arcelor-Mittal, the world’s largest steel company, has idled its Cleveland works along with mills all over the world. All over the Midwest cities and states are imposing massive budget cuts.

The unions should be screaming bloody murder!

All the workers are feeling tremendous pain and anger, casualties of a capitalist crisis of overproduction they did not create. They need to find one another. They need a movement around the slogan “A job is a right.”

Martha Grevatt (mgrevatt@workers.org) has worked at a Chrysler plant in Twinsburg, Ohio, for 22 years and is currently laid off.

WW articles on the BIG CRASH

New publication! What is behind the devastating onslaught on workers’ jobs and homes? This compilation of articles from Workers World, beginning in 2006, analyzes the developing worldwide economic crisis and provides strategies for a fight-back movement against the corporations and banks.

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Marx on unions & international solidarity

Excerpts from the new book “Low-Wage Capitalism” by Fred Goldstein.

In the crisis now unfolding, a revitalized workers’ movement, in order to be effective, will have to draw in all the sectors that have either been left out or marginalized. All workers’ movements and working-class communities must have a place in the struggle that takes into account their particular needs, without being subordinated or subjected to bureaucratic leadership. This includes the fight for jobs, for income, for the right to a home and food. Occupations, mass demonstrations, strikes, and every form of struggle will be required. This is the road to a renewed workers’ movement encompassing the unions and the far broader sections of the working class whose fighting spirit must be mobilized on the basis of addressing their needs.

Karl Marx delivered an address to the General Council of the International Workingmen’s Association (the First International) in 1866. Included was a section on “The Future of the Unions.” This passage, along with many others, is as relevant today for the labor movement as it was back in 1866 when it was first delivered:

“Apart from their original purpose, they [the unions] must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves as acting as the champions of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the [unorganized] into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as agricultural laborers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.”

Marx directed this passage to the advanced workers of the time in Europe. He was attempting to intervene in the developing trade union movement, which was reviving and growing after the defeat of the revolutions of 1848 and the subsequent suppression of the workers.

This was the early stage of the union movement and the dominant forces were primarily workers in the skilled trades. The earliest General Council of the First International was made up of tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, furniture makers, weavers, a mason, a watchmaker, a musical instrument maker, and a hairdresser. The powerful force behind the International was the London Trades Council, representing numerous organized trades in what was then the center of world capitalism and colonialism. It was not only the development of the unions

and the class struggle that caused Marx to intervene, but also growing internationalism. It was the workers themselves who initiated the International. Marx became the heart and soul of it after the workers declared their intentions.

The genesis of the move toward international solidarity was the importation of strikebreakers from continental Europe by the English capitalists. The wages of craft workers were lower on the Continent. French workers had not yet gained the right to organize. In November 1863, the English workers drew up a letter to the French workers. This is an excerpt:

“A fraternity of peoples is highly necessary for the cause of labor, for we find that whenever we attempt to better our social condition by reducing the hours of toil, or by raising the price of labor, our employers threaten us with bringing over French-

men, Germans, or Belgians and others to do our work at a reduced rate of wages; and we are sorry to say, that this has been done, though not from any desire on the part of our continental brethren to injure us, but through a want of regular and systematic communications between the industrial classes of all countries. Our aim is to bring up the wages of the ill-paid to as near a level as possible with that of those who are better remunerated, and not to allow our employers to play us off one against the other, and so drag us down to the lowest possible condition, suitable to their avaricious bargaining.”

On September 28, 1864, workers from Paris brought the French reply to be presented to a packed St. Martin’s Hall in London. After the English letter was read, the French read their reply. Here is a short excerpt:

“Industrial progress, the division of labor, freedom of trade—these are three factors which should receive our attention today, for they promise to change the very substance of the economic life of society. Compelled by the force of circumstances and the demands of the time, capital is concentrating and organizing in mighty financial and industrial combinations. Should we not take some defensive measure, this force, if not counter-balanced in some way, will soon be a despotic power. We, the workers of the world, must unite and erect an insurmountable barrier to the baleful system which would divide humanity into two classes: a host of hungry and brutalized people on the one hand, and a clique of fat, overfed mandarins on the other. Let us seek our salvation through solidarity.” □

Puerto Ricans arrested for demanding independence

By John Santos

On May 6, six Puerto Rican activists/artists were arrested in the U.S. House of Representatives for demanding that the United States grant independence to Puerto Rico.

They are: Luis Enrique Romero, Maria “Chabela” Rodriguez, the musician Jose Rivera, also known as Tony Mapeye, mechanical designer Luis Suárez, nurse Eugenia Perez and retired worker Ramon Diaz. Singer and actor Carlos Esteban Fonseca accompanied them but maintained a distance from the protest. Their lawyer is Manuel Rivera.

Singing the Puerto Rican protest song “Oubao Moin,” wearing Puerto Rican flags and carrying signs saying, “111 years of colonialism is a shame,” they were prepared to read a statement. Before they could do so they were removed from their seats by security and were arrested a short time later.

“We, seven Puerto Ricans, have come here to protest against the colonialism to which Puerto Rico is subjected. We come in good will, in peace. We want to be a free nation,” said Suárez. “Our legislators cannot even guarantee us space on our own television channels, because it is territory occupied by the federal government,” Fonseca said.

After their release, the six independentistas went back to Puerto Rico, where they announced there would be new acts of civil disobedience to get the U.S. government to resolve the status of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has been a colony of the

United States since 1898, during the Spanish-American War. As part of that war the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898. Over the years there have been several powerful movements and parties inside Puerto Rico and the U.S. opposing colonization. Most have faced heavy repression.

Even before the current worldwide economic downturn, Puerto Rico was deeply affected by its own economic crisis. On May 1, 2006, over 100,000 workers were laid off when Puerto Rico’s Commonwealth government shut down. Claiming it could not afford to pay its employees’ salaries, the government temporarily closed most of its operations, including all public schools.

Puerto Rico’s fiscal problems can also be blamed on the fact that since 1992 the

government has privatized many public industries—including telecommunications, shipping and health care. Since the global economic crisis of capitalism has taken hold all over the world, another 30,000 government workers have lost their jobs—about 14 percent of the remaining work force. The government is Puerto Rico’s main employer. Some 218,000 people, or 21 percent of the work force on the island of 3.9 million inhabitants, hold government jobs.

With so many people in Puerto Rico suffering under the boot of U.S. colonialism, there needs to be a huge fight, not only in Puerto Rico but here in the belly of the beast, to organize and demand that Washington stop persecuting the movement for Puerto Rico’s independence. □

From Texas death row A review of Mumia’s book

Continued from page 3

erty or property without due justice.

This is what we’re taught from grade school. And these are the values that we hold up before the world, loudly and proudly proclaiming to be a nation of freedom. Freedom that we love so much that our young volunteer for military service to defend what we have with their life.

“Jailhouse Lawyers” shatters these myths and awakens us to the true function of their law, its origin, its intent and who it serves, beginning with the Declaration of Independence (the breaking away of the rich slave masters, the wealthy landholders and the powerful governors of the colonies that were in rebellion and demanding freedom; a freedom that included the freedom to keep others in bondage).

The slaves were governed by separate, uniquely designed laws, known as slave codes, to keep them subdued.

After slavery was abolished in its traditional chattel form, a new series of laws were passed called “Black Codes” that made everything but breathing a crime for the ex-slaves.

Consequently, many were arrested in droves, as the Black Codes did what they were designed to do: re-harness their labor.

We, the prisoners, are the new slaves,

governed now by “Prisoner Codes,” codes that have lately become stricter with the passage of the Prison Litigation Reform Act.

In all the ways that people can resist bondage, slaves, ex-slaves and prisoners have done it. In every way that one can go about attempting to acquire justice, they have done it.

Using the law and litigation is just one of the many avenues taken by those who fight back. These men and women who litigate from behind prison walls are commonly called writ writers or jailhouse lawyers.

It is their stories that Mumia brings to us in his latest book. These men and women are our heroes and finally their history has been recorded for all to read.

At the Summit of the Americas, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez gave Barack Obama the book “Open Veins of Latin America.” I wish that I could give “Jailhouse Lawyers” to every person in the United States, including the 2.3 million slaves locked in these plantations.

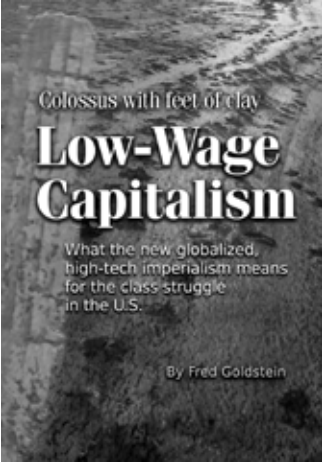
The writer is a founding member of Panthers United for Revolutionary Education, a group of politically active, death-row prisoners in Texas. Earvin has been on death row since he was 18 years old and is now 51. Earvin is an honorary member of Workers World Party.

► **Low-Wage Capitalism** by Fred Goldstein is a most timely and important work, as the working class prepares for a “fightback” during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Great Depression.”
– Clarence Thomas, Executive Board ILWU Local 10

Low-Wage Capitalism

A timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval, the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

Available at www.Leftbooks.com



As foreclosures hit new high

Moratorium needed more than ever

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Home foreclosures soared in April to a record-high rate. One of every 374 homes, or 342,000 homes in the United States, received a foreclosure filing: a notice of default, auction or sale notice, or bank repossession. Filings were up 32 percent from April 2008. (realtytrac.com)

This happened despite predictions by analysts of a lower rate for the month because of high foreclosure activity in March. Rick Sharga, a spokesperson for RealtyTrac, stated: “April was a shocker. ... We had been predicting 3.4 million filings for [all of 2009], but we’ll blow those numbers out of the water.” (cnmmoney.com)

Nevada is the hardest-hit state. One in every 68 housing units received a foreclosure filing in April, more than five times the national average. Filings in the state were up 111 percent from a year ago. In Las Vegas, one in every 56 homes is in foreclosure.

Florida has the second-worst rate in the U.S., with a 37 percent month-to-month increase in foreclosures and a 75 percent increase from last year. In the Cape Coral-Fort Myers metropolitan area, one in every 57 homes received a foreclosure filing during April. Foreclosure activity in April increased 31 percent from March.

California rounds out the top three states, with one in every 138 housing units receiving a foreclosure filing in April. To-

tal foreclosure activity in California was up 42 percent from April 2008.

The six California metro areas of Merced, Modesto, Riverside-San Bernardino, Bakersfield, Vallejo-Fairfield and Stockton are included as having the top 10 highest documented foreclosure rates in the country. Las Vegas is on top, with Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Miami and Orlando, Fla., completing the list.

The top 10 states for foreclosure filings in April accounted for 75 percent of the national total. California had the highest total (96,560), followed by Florida (64,588), Nevada (16,266), Arizona (16,245), Ohio (12,324), Georgia (11,521), Texas (11,314), Michigan (10,830) and Virginia (6,254).

Filings overall were up 32 percent from April 2008 but rose less than 1 percent from March. At the same time, the number of bank repossessions, known as REOs, fell on a monthly and yearly basis, down 11 percent from March.

According to James J. Saccacio, chief executive officer of RealtyTrac, “This suggests that many lenders and servicers are beginning foreclosure proceedings on delinquent loans that had been delayed by legislative and industry moratoria. It’s likely that we’ll see a corresponding spike in REOs as these loans move through the foreclosure process over the next few months.”

Moratorium on foreclosures NOW!
What can stop the crushing home fore-

closure crisis in the U.S.? The first thing that should be done by the Obama administration is a declaration of a state of emergency on the national level, or at least in the top 10 states wracked by the disaster.

The federal government easily steps in when natural disasters occur. When a federal disaster area or state of emergency is declared after a tornado, for example, part of the emergency measures include a moratorium on government-backed mortgage foreclosures.

The president is also empowered to take executive measures when a “man”-made catastrophe happens. The same actions should apply to the “foreclosure tsunami” engulfing the U.S. A moratorium on all foreclosures must be put in place immediately to allow homeowners a chance to save their homes.

The quasi-governmental companies referred to as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac own half the residential mortgages in the U.S. Both were bailed out by the federal government in 2008 to the tune of at least \$400 billion.

Fannie and Freddie, along with other major lenders, which include JPMorgan Chase, CitiBank and Bank of America, are required by federal law as well as by the terms of their bailouts and pursuant to the Making Home Affordable Program, to work out mortgage loan modifications. They are supposed to lower at-risk borrowers’ monthly payments, including property taxes and insurance, to no more

than 31 percent of a borrower’s gross income in order to avoid foreclosure.

The South Carolina Supreme Court, on the initiative of Fannie Mae, recently issued a temporary restraining order on all foreclosures of participants in the Making Home Affordable Program, to give homeowners a chance to take advantage of the loan modification provisions.

This moratorium should be extended to every state for all loans covered under the Obama/Treasury plan. The moratorium should include unemployed workers’ loans, as well as those of seniors and disabled people, who are disproportionately affected by the foreclosure crisis.

Under the federal Making Home Affordable Program, an unemployed worker must verify that he or she will be receiving unemployment benefits for at least nine months in order to count those funds as income for purposes of negotiating loan modifications. Because of this, many unemployed workers are or will be excluded from being able to take advantage of the program. In a state like Michigan, where the unemployment rate is expected to hit 17 percent by the end of the year, this means unemployed workers who have exhausted or are soon to exhaust their unemployment benefits will continue to lose their homes at record rates.

In addition, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and all government agencies have programs or regulations mandating that tenants be offered rental options to stay in properties subject to foreclosure. These programs are routinely being ignored by these government bodies.

In Detroit, for example, Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae are the leading evictors of tenants, many of whom don’t even know that the properties have gone through foreclosure.

There should be an immediate moratorium on evictions of tenants in foreclosed properties owned or backed by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac or HUD.

The twin catastrophes of high unemployment and delinquent home loans mean millions more workers still face losing their homes as the economic crisis continues. It is time for activists to continue fighting for and begin enacting a foreclosure moratorium on the street, in the neighborhoods and at every level of government. □

City charges rent at homeless shelters

By Brenda Ryan
New York

The cruelty of capitalism is clear as more than 5.7 million people in the U.S. have lost their jobs in the last 18 months and hundreds of thousands of homes are foreclosed every month. Now New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has come up with a new form of ruthlessness for those suffering the most.

His administration recently started charging rent to homeless people who are working and live in public shelters. People must pay up to 50 percent of their income to stay in these minimal facilities. They are making far too little to rent a place of their own. Having to turn over a huge portion of their earnings for rent means they won’t be able to save money to get out of the shelters.

The New York Times reported May 9 that one woman who makes \$8.40 per hour as a cashier at Sbarro received a notice that she would have to give \$336 of her approximately \$800-per-month income to a shelter she has lived in since March. Another woman who makes \$1,700 per month as a security guard was told she must pay \$1,099 in rent to her shelter.

“Families are being told to pay up or get out,” Steven Banks, the chief attorney for Legal Aid Society, told the Times. He noted that a survivor of domestic violence was actually locked out of her room.

Billionaire Bloomberg is pushing this policy as a record number of people have lost their homes. The Coalition for the Homeless reported in December that the number of homeless families in New York City was 9,720—the highest level since the city began reporting such data 25 years ago. The total number of homeless people was 36,000, including nearly 16,000 children.

Not only has the economic crisis increased poverty and homelessness, but the

Coalition for the Homeless says Bloomberg’s policy of denying federal housing vouchers to homeless people has also increased the number of people in shelters. Those who receive federal housing vouchers pay no more than 30 percent of their income on rent. In 2004 Bloomberg halted the city’s long-time practice of giving homeless families priority in receiving the vouchers.

The city’s new shelter policy is based on a 1995 regulation issued by then-Governor George Pataki. The rule was never implemented because of an ongoing class action lawsuit against the city. The case, which was filed in 1983 and settled in

2008, claimed the city failed to provide adequate shelter for homeless families.

The new “income contribution requirement” is devastating for people who aren’t earning enough to live on in the most costly city in the country. One-bedroom apartments typically cost more than \$1,500, even in the outer boroughs.

New York State Assembly member Keith Wright held a press conference on May 14 denouncing Bloomberg’s policy and announcing legislation to halt the new rules.

People must fight back against all attacks on poor and working people. No rent for shelters! Stop evictions and foreclosures! □



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The G20 summits are held in response to the greatest worldwide economic crisis since the 1930s. But these high-level meetings of governments and bankers are not held to rescue the people of the world from depression level unemployment, evictions, homelessness, poverty, social and economic inequality and war.

The last G20 Summit held in London in early April was met with massive protests.

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U.S. military budget saps economy

By Gavrielle Gemma

Once again the military budget is rising, dashing hopes that the new administration would reverse the course of the Bush years. As many as 100,000 troops are being added to the military, with 22,000 slated to go to Afghanistan.

The annual budget of the Department of Defense will go from \$487.7 billion to \$527.7 billion this year. However, the cost of the Iraq/Afghanistan invasions and occupations, which is counted separately, will come to at least another \$150 billion for the fiscal year.

To get a true measure of the cost of imperialist expansion and intervention, add in the debt payments for past military spending (\$263 billion), nuclear weapons paid for through the Department of Energy (\$22 billion), Homeland Security (\$57 billion), military construction (\$25 billion) and the CIA (\$48 billion). It all adds up to more than \$1 trillion. (Rolling Stone Magazine; Center for Defense Information)

The United States accounts for nearly half of the combined military budgets of the entire planet. The Pentagon budget comes to more than the gross domestic product of all 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. (World Bank)

On the same day that the military budget was released, a report came out entitled "Feeding America." Based on 2005-2007 data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Agriculture Department, it found that in this country 3.5 million children under the age of 5 go hungry. That's 17 percent of all children in the U.S.

The Black Hawk helicopter-UH-60M Upgrade, made its first flight last summer, and the U.S. aircraft-manufacturer Sikorsky will start delivering them to the Army next year.

But the imperialist priority is to build billions of dollars worth of new weapons each year.

The Pentagon is wholly in the hands of the ruling class. Its function is to secure global markets, loot natural resources and subjugate the workers of each country for the capitalists. Its mission is to destroy any opposition to this from governments and popular rebellions, causing millions to die each year.

The militarists justify these monumental costs in the name of "national security." But to have real security, all people need jobs, homes, health care, food, education and culture. All this is being sacrificed at the altar of the U.S. military-industrial-banking complex (MIBC). The significance of these mind-numbing figures lies not only in the Pentagon's brutality and cost but its growing control over every aspect of society.

'Generals over the White House'

In his book "Generals over the White House" (WW Publishers, 1980), Sam Marcy wrote that "The Military Industrial Complex is an historically inevitable outgrowth of the inherent tendencies in capitalist production in the epoch of imperialism. ... [With] the accelerating degeneration of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism ... the military in pursuit of its ends constantly needs greater and greater resources of an economic, industrial and technological character."



The Air Force wants a new bomber equipped with 21st-century technology. That could mean stealthier surface materials and laser weapons—and it might even skip the pilot.

Early capitalism, while brutal, expanded industry. Its profits grew with the exploitation of labor globally. Today, with global markets glutted, the capitalists cannot reinvest most of that profit into useful production. Instead, monopoly capitalism is addicted to three pillars of obscene profit: looting public treasuries through debt, military expenditures and a host of money speculation schemes like those that brought on the current bank crisis. None produce anything of value.

Capitalism, unlike socialism, is not a rational, planned system of production and mass distribution. Capitalism goes where the rate of profit is highest and damn the consequences. Any monopoly capitalist wanting to make huge profits must feed at the public military trough.

Weapons and military technology are not bought at a store. Governments buy them, with the people's money. The MIBC simply robs the treasury with the agreement of the politicians it puts in office—agreement obtained either through threat or bribery. Each year the government borrows money to cover the cost. If it means cutting schools and hospitals, or letting New Orleans be buried in water, so be it.

Can Obama reverse this?

"The military wants to run the state," wrote Marcy. "It grows out of the evolution of the fusion of the military with the industrial and banking complex. ... Politicians cannot resist." When Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower left office in 1961 after two terms as president, he warned of the rise of the military-industrial complex, a term he coined. Almost 50 years later, the invasion of the military into all civilian matters has gone much further.

We're familiar with the revolving door of retired military brass taking executive positions in military companies. The flip side of that is to bring corporate executives in to run the military. In the first Bush-Cheney administration, 32 executives or major shareholders of weapons contractors were appointed to top policy-making positions in the Pentagon, the National Security Council, the Department of Energy and the State Department. (World Policy Institute Special Report, October 2004) They are still there, with hundreds more infiltrating all the councils of the White House and Congress.

A comparison with the Carter administration can shed light on today's reality. Jimmy Carter ran on a program of cutting the military budget and signing the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT). During his four years in office there was the largest increase in military expenditures thus far. He scrapped SALT. The Carter Doctrine defined the Persian Gulf as an American lake to be defended with "all the force neces-

sary." The country was in a recession.

Sam Marcy explained that, regardless of Carter's personal intentions, he could not withstand the pressure and threats of the MIBC. Carter wound up appointing four right-wing Republicans to key posts. Admirals, generals and their close associates ran critical aspects of the government, both inside the White House and out.

A who's who of President Barack Obama's administration goes a long way in explaining the call for higher military spending, more troops and continued occupation regardless of Obama's intentions. First and foremost, Bush Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was kept on the job. Commanding Gen. David Petraeus said, "If President Obama wants to make any dramatic changes in the Pentagon, he's going to have to do them in the first year, and if he's got the same secretary, how can Obama do it." (New York Times, Jan. 21)

Gen. James Jones is Obama's national security advisor and head of the National Security Council, where Gates and Petraeus also sit. Jones, whose office is practically next to Obama's, is "a classic, pragmatic conservative," wrote Robert Dreyfuss. "He's a titan of the military-industrial complex. He is pro-nuclear. He likes oil drilling. He was on the boards of Boeing and Chevron." (Rolling Stone Magazine, May 14) Jones opposed a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan and was formerly a deputy to McCain.

Dreyfuss wrote that the National Security Council is changing, but not for the better. "They are giving a far wider range of agencies a seat on the NSC, including key officials involved in trade, energy, economic policy and technology." The new mission is to take up all aspects of society, military and economic.

"When the president cannot attend, Gen. Jones runs top-level meetings. ... They're making the decisions there at the White House on everything," said Leslie Gelb, a former State and Pentagon official.

Military spending doesn't help workers

Mass layoffs continue and home foreclosures are soaring. But Wall Street felt better when the military budget was announced. Raytheon CFO David Wajsgas said, "There was nervousness. We are encouraged, this budget did very well for the company. Stocks rose 7 percent." (Wall Street Journal, April 23)

Good for the capitalists, bad for the workers. A trillion dollars a year for the military will not stimulate the economy and produce jobs, but it will further replace civilian production.

Marcy wrote, "Carter conveyed the im-

pression that the defense budget would cushion a recession and curb unemployment. Wall Street was happy." The Wall Street Journal wrote in January 1980 that it would mean more jobs and an end of recessionary expectations.

Why didn't that happen, asks Marcy. "Military production, if it is relied on as a stimulant over a protracted period, like any other stimulant ultimately turns into its opposite and becomes a devastating depressant. Militarism is an intractable capitalist disease in which production is destined for a blind market for profit and not for human use.

"Military production in the epoch of imperialism is a special case of commodity production. Marx wrote in 'Capital' that 'The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities.'

"The products of the MIC are by Marxist definition commodities. However, in addition to having an exchange value, commodities must also have a use value. The process of capitalist production and exchange in the final analysis means that the capitalist, in order to realize a profit, must produce a useful product. If not, it undermines the very process of capital reproduction. The sum total of the products that emanate from the MIC is devoid of usefulness to society."

Marcy explained that "cranking up the war machine in the 1930s was a stimulus to the capitalist economy, but it was the U.S. appropriation of markets and raw materials from allies and foes that vastly enriched monopoly capitalism at home." Since Korea "the U.S. imperialist establishment has

flooded the U.S. as well as the rest of the world with small bits of paper of decreasing value: indebtedness incurred as a result of the military adventures for which there has been no material return or compensation for the vast expenditures entailed in producing the planes, guns, tanks, etc."

The "new" bail-out-the-banks philosophy is that saving them and spending on the military will resuscitate the economy. But this warmed-over, trickle-down theory is self-serving and a lie. A funded public jobs program at a decent wage would do much more to stimulate the economy for the workers—but superprofits for a narrow group of monopolists trumps, because they run the government.

In 1967, during the Vietnam War, Sen. Allen J. Ellender of Louisiana said, "The truth of the matter is that in many important respects, the Congress and the nation are in the hands of the military. ... The administration and generals, Department of State seem to have the ways and means of getting just about what they want regardless of the monetary difficulties affecting the nation."

Militarism may still keep the heart of monopoly capitalism pumping. But it is not as powerful as the global working class could be, fighting shoulder to shoulder to wrest back some of what we need and to liberate humanity once and for all. □



U.S. military proposes to upgrade its arsenal of 5,400-nuclear warheads.



This 14,500-ton destroyer's mission is to pound enemy positions in support of troops onshore. The Navy has contracted Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics to each build one.

As resistance grows in Somalia

Imperialists send more ships

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A newly reconfigured Transitional Federal Government established during early 2009 in Somalia has lost control of large areas of the country to the al-Shabab and Hisbul Islam resistance organizations. On May 17 and 18, the towns of Jowhar and Mahaday north of Mogadishu, the capital, fell to al-Shabab.

These developments represent a tremendous blow to the TFG, headed by Sheikh Sharif Sheik Ahmed, who was brought into the governing coalition after previously serving as one of the important leaders of the Union of Islamic Courts (ICU). The ICU has split over support of the government headed by President Ahmed, who was a middle-of-the-road figure in the alliance of organizations that took control of large sections of the country prior to the Ethiopian invasion and occupation in December 2006.

The ICU fought against the Ethiopian intervention, which was encouraged, financed and orchestrated by the United States. With the intensification of fighting and the efforts of the U.S. to broker a peace settlement in the country, the al-Shabab youth wing of the IUC took over leadership in the fighting against the Ethiopian military. It refused to enter into the new TFG because of the latter's alliance with the U.S. and the continued presence of African Union troops from Uganda and Burundi in Mogadishu.

Ethiopian troops pulled out of Somalia in January. The initial policy of the Ahmed government was to seek reconciliation with al-Shabab and the recently

formed Hisbul Islam. However, in recent weeks, the TFG has called upon Somalis to support the government and take up arms against the resistance groups, which the U.S. has labeled as al-Qaeda affiliates.

It was reported that on April 13 Col. Omar Hashi Adan, an ally of President Ahmed who served as a former commander of the militias of the ICU, spoke to supporters stating that "government troops are expected to wage war on the opposition who are still fighting in Mogadishu and other parts of the country and who have refused to accept the peace." (Garowe Online, May 15)

On April 18 fighting erupted between remnants of the ICU, who have served as the dwindling backbone of military support to the TFG, and al-Shabab forces in southern Mogadishu. A residence that reportedly housed al-Shabab fighters was bombed. In response Sheikh Mohamed Mohamud Jimale, a military supporter of the TFG, was gunned down.

During the last week of April, another former ICU leader, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who heads the Eritrean-based Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARSA) and represents the most significant component of the Hizbul Islam, returned to Mogadishu after being in exile during the Ethiopian occupation. The TFG claimed that Aweys' return was aimed at seeking reconciliation with the Ahmed government.

However, on April 25 Aweys articulated his view of the current situation in Somalia. He stated that his supporters did not recognize the TFG due to the fact that it was "not a sovereign government and is commanded by foreign powers." (Garowe

Online, May 15)

On May 16, the U.S. and the United Nations accused the Eritrean government of supplying arms to the resistance fighters in Somalia. The Obama administration's top State Department official on African Affairs, Jonnie Carson, told the BBC that evidence suggested that Eritrea was providing weapons and munitions to al-Shabab.

The Eritrean ambassador to the U.N., Araya Desta, rejected the charges. In a May 16 BBC interview, Desta asked: "Why do we have to support factions in Somalia? This accusation is always cooked by some neighboring countries and some big powers in order to defame Eritrea. How do they know that Eritrea has sent weapons to Somalia, through which areas have these planes flown? ... As you know the American army is in Djibouti, the French are in Djibouti and they control everything in the sea as well as in the land."

The current regime in Somalia is precarious. Reporter Stephanie McCrummen writes: "Ahmed's government, while popular with many Somalis, directly controls only Mogadishu's airport, its seaport and a small corner of the ruined city where the presidential palace is fortified by 4,000 African Union peacekeepers in something akin to Baghdad's Green Zone. Ahmed has remained sequestered there for most of the past week." (Washington Post, May 18)

The 'anti-piracy' campaign

The U.S. government has vowed to pursue the prosecution of a 16-year-old Somali national who was taken into custody by the U.S. Navy after a failed nego-

tiation aimed at the release of the Danish-owned and U.S.-flagged Maersk Alabama. Three other Somalis were killed by the Navy after they sought to negotiate an end to the vessel seizure on April 12.

Abdiwali Muse was charged on April 21 with piracy and four other counts that include conspiracy to commit hostage-taking. Muse is being held in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in lower Manhattan.

U.S. Magistrate Andrew Peck completely dismissed the defense argument that Muse is a juvenile and declared without any evidence that he is 18 and must be tried as an adult under slave-era laws developed during the 19th century.

Muse, who could face life in prison if convicted, has gained the support of the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth organization, which issued a statement in his defense. The mother of Muse has appealed to the Obama administration to release her son because she claims that he is a child and was misled by his colleagues.

In a similar case in the Netherlands where five Somalis are being prosecuted for alleged "piracy," defense lawyers have described the defendants as modern-

France, the U.S. and oil

Behind the Chad-Sudan conflicts

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A flare-up in tensions between Chad and Sudan during the week of May 4 has exposed the continuing efforts of French and U.S. imperialism to dominate the political and economic future of North and Central Africa. An effort by Chad rebels to attack the capital, N'Djamena, and overturn the Idriss Deby Itno regime was reportedly defeated May 7 after air power halted their advance.

Chad's government, backed by France, immediately blamed Sudan for providing rear-base and material support for the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR), which claimed responsibility for the attacks inside the country. The UFR is an alliance of Chadian opposition groups led by Timan Erdimi.

A French military source based in Chad, where over 1,000 French troops protect the government, claims that the rebels were defeated decisively. "The Chadian army showed itself to be very organized, it was worthy of a modern army," the French military spokesperson stated. (South African Mercury, May 11) The Chadian government claims that 226 rebels and 22 government soldiers were killed in the recent fighting.

The UFR, however, has stated, "We are regrouping, we are taking care of the wounded. The situation is calm, but you will see, it will pick up again." (Mercury)

Sudan's government dismissed accusations that it was behind the attacks. In

turn, it accused the Chadian regime of supporting the Justice and Equality Movement, one of the rebel groups fighting in Sudan's Darfur region against President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's governmental forces.

According to the Sudanese News Agency, "National Defense Minister Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein has affirmed the readiness of the armed forces to repel any aggression on Sudanese lands, pointing to the movements of JEM on the northwestern border with support from the Chadian government." (May 10)

Hussein made these remarks from El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. The defense minister was in the region to monitor developments in the fighting between supporters of Minni Arcua Minnawi—a former rebel leader in Darfur who signed a peace agreement with the central government in 2006—and forces within the JEM.

Minnawi heads a breakaway faction of the Sudan Liberation Army and was appointed as a presidential assistant after a peace deal with the government in Khartoum in 2006.

This fighting in Darfur comes on the heels of an agreement signed between the governments in Chad and Sudan the week before in Doha. The two states had resumed diplomatic ties in November 2008 after a rupture the preceding May.

France behind Security Council session

Chad made a special request for a Unit-

ed Nations Security Council session on May 8 to discuss purported Sudanese aggression. During the session, allies of Sudan defeated attempts by France to pass a resolution "seeking accountability of Sudan for recent incidents in Chad, alleging that the Chadian opposition that led the offensive against Deby's regime came from Sudan." (Sudan Vision, May 10)

The Sudanese ambassador to the United Nations, Abdel Halim Abdelmahmoud, disputed the charges that Khartoum is backing the UFR rebels and said the problems in Chad are internal. In the same source he said, "We have nothing to do with that. This is a Chadian problem. It should be dealt with inside Chad by the Chadians."

The Sudanese ambassador accused the former Chadian colonizer, France, of being the author of the N'Djamena request for an emergency session of the Security Council. Nonetheless, the Security Council on May 8 issued a statement that condemned "renewed military excursions" by "Chadian armed groups coming from outside."

U.S., Israel, oil and the ICC

Since the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants against Sudan President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the U.S. has taken a two-pronged approach. The Barack Obama administration has appointed Special Envoy J. Scott Gration to engage Khartoum in diplomatic efforts. At the same time, the U.S. corporate



media has escalated its attacks against Sudan's government, accusing the leadership of genocide in the Darfur region.

Both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama called Sudan's expulsion of some Western-based aid agencies unacceptable in light of the humanitarian situation in the western region of the country. Khartoum has said that it will accept material assistance from the affected agencies but that any aid must be turned over to the Sudanese state for distribution.

The U.S.-based Save Darfur campaign has accused the Sudanese government of genocide to justify its demand for greater Western military intervention in the region, but various international bodies have not repeated this claim. A May 4 Los Angeles Times article by Edmund Sanders, reporting from Darfur, points out that there is no evidence that genocide is the official policy of the government in Khartoum.

Sanders writes: "In the United States, many see the six-year war in Darfur as a bloody campaign by a Sudanese Arab-dominated government against rebellious 'African' tribes in western Sudan. Two consecutive American presidents and

U.S. forces war on Pakistan, creates huge refugee crisis

By Deirdre Griswold

day “Robin Hoods.” The government of the Netherlands has agreed to prosecute them under a 17th-century law against “sea robbery” due to the fact that the vessel, the Sumanyulo, was registered in a Dutch-controlled area of the Caribbean. (Associated Press, May 18)

Also, the European Union (EU) says it will expand its naval presence in the Indian Ocean around the Seychelles islands, some 1,100 miles off the coast of Somalia.

An EU flotilla, accompanied by both NATO and U.S. ships, will patrol the Gulf of Aden, where most of the vessel seizures have taken place. The EU segment of the operation is the first naval operation launched in its history.

The U.S. Navy has increased its presence as well in the waters off the Horn of Africa. Other efforts are underway to establish a so-called “piracy tribunal” in the U.S.-backed nation of Kenya in east Africa.

These efforts by U.S. imperialism and its allies are designed to continue plans to take control of the Horn of Africa, including Somalia. Utilizing the pretext of fighting “terrorism” on land and “piracy” at sea, the U.S. administration under Obama is maintaining the same foreign policy as the previous government headed by George Bush, which targeted Somalia and the region of east Africa for regime change and the establishment of a permanent military presence in this area of the African continent.

Abayomi Azikiwe is editor of the Pan-African News Wire. The writer has written extensively on political developments in the Horn of Africa over the last two years.



several activist groups have defined it as genocide. “But others, while acknowledging the severity of the violence, question whether it meets the legal definition of genocide. The United Nations determined in 2005 that the Sudanese government wasn’t committing genocide in Darfur. Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders avoid the G-word too.

“The International Criminal Court renewed the debate in March when it issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Judges said his counterinsurgency tactics in Darfur may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, but that there was no evidence of genocide.”

Nevertheless, the U.S. has used the ICC campaign against the Sudanese leader in an attempt to further destabilize his government.

Both Sudan and Chad are oil-producing states that also contain other strategic minerals important in the Western capitalist system. With a population of only 11.1 million, Chad became a major player in the global oil industry when a \$4 billion pipeline linking its oilfields to terminals on the Atlantic coast opened up in 2003. The mostly semi-arid country also produces gold and uranium.

Sudan, with a population of 40 million, is also a major supplier of oil in the international market. The People’s Republic of China and some Middle Eastern and Asian states manage its concessions for oil exploration. Oil production was pro-

There is not a shred of doubt about it: The terrible humanitarian crisis now occurring in the area of northwest Pakistan bordering Afghanistan—described by the U.N. High Commission for Refugees as the worst refugee crisis since Rwanda in 1994—was caused directly by the U.S. government and the Pentagon.

More than 2 million people were forced to flee their homes when the Pakistani Army, financed and equipped by the Pentagon, moved into the Swat Valley after a week of intense bombardment by bombers, jet fighters and helicopter gunships.

“Almost 1.5 million people have registered for assistance since fighting erupted three weeks ago, the UNHCR said, bringing the total number of war-displaced in North West Frontier province to more than 2 million, not including 300,000 the provincial government believes have not registered.” (The Guardian/UK, March 19)

The suffering is shared by a large part of the population in the area. “According to the U.N. just 130,000 people are being accommodated in the sprawling, hot camps in Mardan and Swabi districts, while most are squeezed into the homes of friends or relatives, with as many as 85 people in one house,” continues The Guardian’s report.

There is no count given of the killed and wounded. News media are not being allowed into the area.

Washington has been demanding this offensive for years. Even when Gen. Pervez Musharraf was still the “elected” dictator of Pakistan, articles in the New York Times and Washington Post expressed the frustrations of the U.S. foreign policy and

jected to reach approximately one million barrels per day by the end of 2008. Its natural oil reserves have been estimated to total at least five billion barrels.

French imperialism, which has some drilling rights in Sudan, is very much interested in gaining greater access. The U.S. has been excluded from Sudan’s oil concessions. As a result, diplomatic relations between the two states have become strained over the last few years as Washington targeted the Khartoum government.

In recent months there have been allegations of Sudanese involvement in the shipment of arms from Iran to the Hamas government in Gaza, including a report in the Israeli Haaretz newspaper on April 27 asserting that “an Iranian vessel laden with weapons bound for the Gaza Strip was torpedoed off the coast of Sudan last week, allegedly by Israeli or American forces operating in the area.” (For background, see April 9 article by this writer at www.workers.org.)

Consequently, the recent conflicts and strained diplomatic relations between Sudan and Chad must be viewed within this broader context. Both the U.S. and France are seeking to enhance their influence in the region.

Anti-imperialists in the United States must recognize the material and political sources of these conflicts and uphold the right of self-determination for both the people of Sudan and Chad. Imperialist intervention in these geopolitical areas will only further the oppression of the people in the region. □

military establishments over his reluctance to move forcefully against the semi-autonomous regions along the border.

Musharraf had to relinquish his seat when a huge mass movement swept the opposition party into office a year ago, even after its presidential candidate, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated right after returning home from exile. Her place was taken by her husband, Asif Ali Zardari.

Zardari, now the president of Pakistan, has yielded to the enormous pressures from Washington and launched the long-demanded offensive against areas the U.S. claims are controlled by the Taliban—a religious/political group the U.S. was supporting not that long ago, when it wanted to overthrow a progressive government in Afghanistan that was close to the Soviet Union.

The offensive started just as Zardari was on his way to Washington to meet with President Barack Obama and top representatives of the State Department and Pentagon.

An ominous command switch

At the same time, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates replaced the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. David McKiernan, with Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal. As bad as McKiernan was, it appears that McChrystal will be even worse news for the people of that beleaguered country.

McChrystal’s resume includes years in charge of Joint Special Operations Command—“special ops” soldiers who are trained to disregard conventional laws of war and have been described as the “snake-eating, slit-their-throat” guys—in other words, they are specialists in the most vicious forms of killing.

The Obama administration is also sending thousands more U.S. troops to Afghanistan, despite the obvious mandate it got from the people to end the wars there and in Iraq and bring the troops home.

All this bloodshed and threats of much more cannot wipe away the fact that the U.S. war in Afghanistan is in deep trouble. It is being admitted more and more openly

in the Western media that the population is openly against the war and occupation. Demonstrations occur with regularity, especially when yet another village has been bombed and scores of people are incinerated or blown to bits by U.S. bombs.

And so, in typical fashion, the imperialists are escalating the war in order to save it. They have unleashed a whole new chain of circumstances in Pakistan, hoping to pit militant Muslims there against those who want a secular country. They are also banking on using the Pakistani military against the people, as they have done so successfully before with a whole string of U.S.-supported military dictators.

The British Empire was built on divide and conquer. It would behoove the warhawks in the Pentagon to remember what happened to the British when they once again tried to conquer Afghanistan in the 1890s.

British destroyed but did not conquer

Despite their scorched earth policies and their use of mercenaries from India, the British could not conquer Malakand, the same area now under bombardment, in their 1897 campaign against the Pashtun people. Winston Churchill himself took part in that campaign and wrote a vilely racist book about it.

The British had repeating rifles and could mow down the heroic Pashtun defenders, yet they never could conquer them.

Today, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific director, Sam Zarifi, says the Pakistani army “seems to be pursuing a scorched earth policy” in Malakand. The military has imposed a “shoot on sight” policy for anyone violating an indefinite curfew imposed there. (Washington Post, May 14)

But the spirit of resistance to imperial/colonial domination that defeated the British in 1897 continues to run strong throughout the Swat Valley and the whole area of the North West Frontier. These latest atrocities will only burn it that much deeper into the hearts of the people for generations to come. □

Al Naqba remembered in NYC



A group of demonstrators, about half of them young students, gathered in New York’s Times Square on May 17 to commemorate the Naqba, or calamity, wreaked upon the Palestinian people. It was on that same date in 1948 that Israel began its occupation of Palestine. Al-Awda (NY) and the Break the Siege on Gaza Coalition called the rally, supported by many anti-imperialist and

anti-war groups from the area. After a rally, the demonstrators marched to Union Square.

Many of the participating organizations also support the “Viva Palestina” initiative of George Galloway, a member of the British Parliament, which plans to take \$10 million worth of aid from North America to the Gaza Strip, starting out on July 4. (www.vivapalestina.org)

—Report and photo by John Catalinotto



Free Troy Davis!

On May 19, in cities across the U.S. and globally, demonstrations, rallies, petition drives and other actions brought worldwide pressure on Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue to stop the wrongful imprisonment and execution of Troy Anthony Davis.

Despite seven of nine trial witnesses who recanted their testimony, despite the exculpatory statements of additional witnesses pointing to another man as the shooter in the case, U.S. courts have continually refused to grant Davis a new hearing.

Davis' case highlights some of the most brutal injustices of the "criminal justice system" in this country, which seemingly seeks to incarcerate and execute as many poor and oppressed people as it can get away with. Yet Davis is not alone in his fight for justice and his life.

Davis has twice come within days and even hours of being executed. But grassroots mobilizations impacted state and federal authorities and they put a stop to the slated killing.

It's time to redouble all efforts to get justice for Davis. We encourage readers to sign the on-line petition to "Stop the execution!" and "Free Troy Davis now!" by clicking on www.iacenter.org. □



Imperialism and the Tamils

The government of Sri Lanka has proclaimed victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam, a guerrilla army that for a quarter century has fought to create a separate state for the oppressed Tamil people in this fertile island country off the southern tip of India. The military campaign against the Tamil Tigers has been a very bloody one, with thousands of Tamil civilians dead after being trapped on a peninsula where they suffered air strikes, starvation and disease. The full extent of the casualties is still not known—the Sri Lankan government has barred journalists from the area—but reports from doctors and others on the terrible situation have filtered out.

More than 100,000 Tamils living in Britain, Canada, the U.S. and elsewhere have held passionate demonstrations and hunger strikes appealing for these countries to stop the slaughter. Early in April, 100,000 protesters marched through central London to protest the abuses against Tamil people in Sri Lanka. And later that month, even as thousands of Tamils occupied London's Parliament Square, the British Tamils Forum called on the government there to "take the matter to the U.N. Security Council to get a ceasefire implemented."

The authorities in these imperialist countries have put on a sympathetic face and basically told the demonstrators, "We feel your pain. But there's nothing we can do."

This is sheer hypocrisy. Britain and the U.S. can—and do—take vigorous action when their imperialist interests are threatened. Just in recent years, their militaries have intervened, at great cost, in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. They didn't go there to stop

genocide. In fact, they made up lies and excuses in order to get the necessary congressional/parliamentary go-ahead. They have terrorized the people but not been able to break the resistance, whose support among the population has grown stronger. At the bottom of it all is the U.S. and British imperialist design to control this resources-rich area of southwest Asia.

In addition, they have pushed resolutions through the U.N. Security Council to impose harsh sanctions on Sudan and Zimbabwe, supposedly because of "human rights" violations but in reality over what is dearest to imperialism: profits.

Sudan has oil and is developing its resources with the aid of other countries, including China. Because of sanctions, it does not trade with the U.S. In Zimbabwe, the government finally told the white farmers who held all the most valuable land to leave. It allowed veterans of the liberation war to take back what had been stolen from their ancestors by the invading British colonizers. Before taking this step, the government had waited for years for Britain to live up to its agreement and buy out the rich farmers, but that didn't happen.

Sanctions on these countries were accompanied by indignant noises in the Security Council about defending human rights. But when the Sri Lankan military slaughters an oppressed people, the imperialists are suddenly "unable" to do anything about it.

It is up to the progressive, anti-imperialist movement around the world to take up the cause of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka for self-determination. The imperialists are the last ones to be sincere about it. □

Haiti's hunger made in USA

By G. Dunkel

The U.S. Coast Guard and a few individual boaters pulled 27 people out of the ocean off south Florida May 13. Ten of them were dead after fleeing mass hunger and misery in Haiti. The sailing vessel they were on had sunk around 2 a.m. and the survivors had to tread water for 10 hours until their rescue. (Boston Globe, May 14)

"The boat was obviously overloaded," Coast Guard Captain James Fitton told the Boston Globe. "It's a tragedy that someone would be so callous with human life."

But the real callous operator in this tragedy is the U.S. government.

There are 30,000 Haitians under deportation orders in the United States. As soon as the U.S. can sort out the details, it intends to send them back.

However, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano could use an executive order to grant them the immigration status called temporary protected status (TPS). A whole host of U.S. organizations, newspapers and local governments—such as the NAACP, the Washington Post, the New York City Council, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners—all support TPS. This status has in the past been granted to residents of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Somalia and Liberia, but never to Haitians.

Conditions in Haiti are so horrendous that they obviously justify TPS. More than 80 percent of Haitians live on less than \$2 a day and 50 percent live on less than \$1 a day. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network of the United Nations estimated the size of the "food-insecure population" in Haiti as 2.4 million in April. This is an improvement over February, but it still means one out of four Haitians never get enough to eat, are seriously hungry all the time. Children are stunted. Adults are prone to get sick and have trouble working.

The worldwide financial crisis is squeezing Haiti, which lives on remittances. The \$1.65 billion received from Haitians abroad in 2008 was more than a quarter of the country's annual income. But as Haitians living abroad lose income, what they can send home is going to shrink. Sending back home 30,000 Haitians now living in the U.S. will mean an additional big drop.

Haiti still hasn't recovered from the four hurricanes—Ike, Hanna, Gustav and Faye—that hit in 2008, causing over \$1 billion in damage and taking nearly 800 lives. Millions of tons of mud still clog the streets of Gonaïves in the north. Less than 2 percent of the terracing work designed to protect the city against mud slides from another hurricane has been done.

Thirty years ago Haiti supplied nearly all its own

food, including rice and sugar. But in 1986, when it went to the International Monetary Fund for emergency money after the regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier collapsed under mass pressure and a U.S. plane flew him to the French Riviera, the IMF insisted Haiti open its markets to foreign rice.

IMF spokespeople piously and cynically explain that Haiti didn't have to agree. It could have forgone the loans. The IMF fails to mention that this would have led to a complete collapse of the Haitian economy.

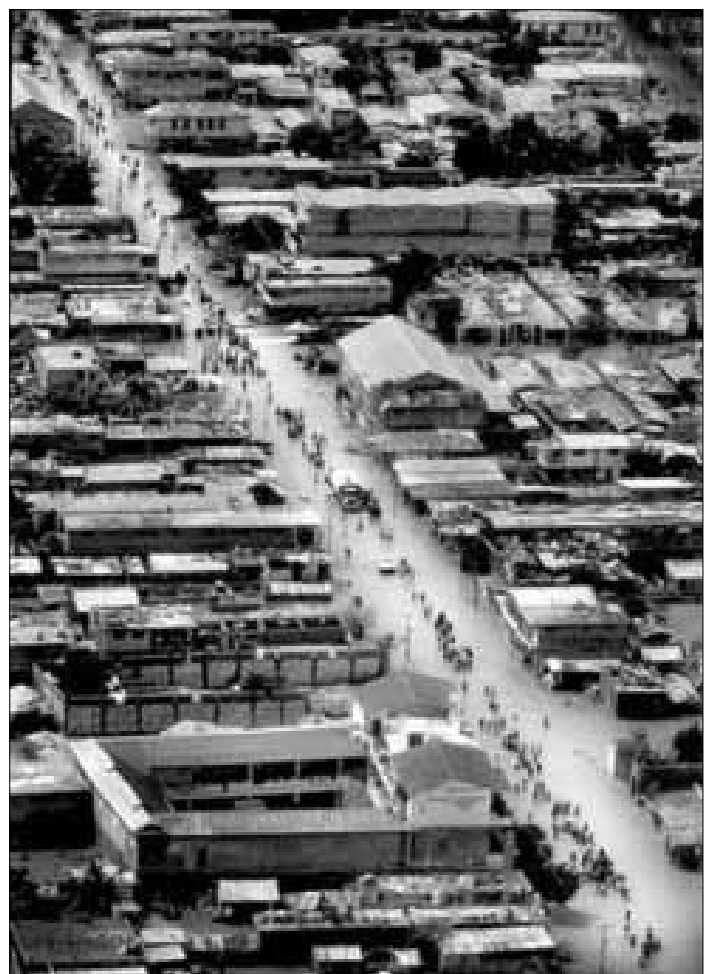
Since the late 1980s, through a cycle of coups, economic pressure and enticements, along with free food from time to time amply distributed by all sorts of NGOs, the market for food produced in Haiti has been destroyed.

Now, according to Avi Lewis, a producer for Al Jazeera's "Inside the USA," nearly all the food sold in Haiti is imported and Haiti is the third-largest market for U.S. rice. Rice is the most subsidized U.S. food. Beyond this, more than 50 percent of the cost of all the rice the U.S. donates to Haiti goes directly to U.S. producers, processors and transporters. By law, the U.S. is forbidden to buy food outside the country that it is "donating" for relief. So the cheaper solution—just buying the rice in Haiti, giving farmers there an income and saving transportation costs—was outlawed.

While hunger and misery, along with U.N. occupation forces, roam the streets of Haiti's cities, the people have become more politically conscious. In recent partial Senate elections in which Fanmi Lavalas, the party of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was arbitrarily kept off the ballot, only 1 to 3 percent of the people voted. (Haiti-Liberté, April 22-28) The democratically elected Aristide, who had strong popular support, was kidnapped by the U.S. in 2004 and flown out of the country. He has been living in exile.

Berthony Dupont, director of Haïti-Liberté, points out: "It is with much dynamism and courage that the people not only resisted the Duvaliers' dictatorship but equally grew politically. Today they know their class enemies as a result of a profound maturing of people's consciousness confronting the anti-people practices of the owning class and its international allies."

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People walk up and down the flooded main street in Gonaïves, Haiti, Sept. 4, 2008. This photo is one of a series by the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News winner Miami Herald photographer Patrick Farrell, announced April 20.

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Madrid court outlaws anti-capitalist party

By John Catalinotto

By outlawing a new political party from an upcoming June 7 ballot, ruling circles in the Spanish regime are exposing their links to the 36-year-long fascist reign of Francisco Franco. Their latest anti-democratic step involved fraudulent charges to prevent the newly formed International Initiative—Solidarity among the Peoples (II-SP) organization from competing in elections to the European Parliament.

Spain’s Supreme Court on May 16 by an 11-5 majority supported a lower court decision to ban the II-SP. The new party is appealing to the Constitutional Court to reverse this, while waging an international petition campaign to gain support. A final May 21 decision is likely to maintain the ban, unless a massive struggle arises to reverse it.

The courts are imposing the ban in the midst of the economic crisis that exploded in 2008 and hit Spain much harder than most other developed capitalist countries. The “housing bubble” burst with a fury in Spain, stopping almost all new construction projects. Official unemployment climbed to more than 17 percent in April. Young people can’t find permanent jobs.

To underline an anti-capitalist solution to this crisis, some leftist parties, both on a federal level and in the regions that consist of oppressed nations within the Spanish state, joined together this spring to form the II-SP. They offered a relatively broad but clearly anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist alternative.

The II-SP competes not only with

rightist bourgeois parties like José María Aznar’s People’s Party, but also with Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s governing Socialist Workers Party (PSOE). It considers Zapatero pro-capitalist, despite his “socialist” label. It competes even with the United Left (IU) movement—the traditional Spanish left close to the Spanish Communist Party—that revolutionaries consider to be trapped inside the capitalist parliamentary system.

Historically, the Spanish state has included at least four peoples or nationalities. The people of Galicia in the northwest, of Catalonia in the east, and of the Basque Country in the northeast have been under the heel of the Castilian ruling class. Repression was especially brutal during the Franco period against local customs and any languages other than Castilian Spanish.

Today it also includes immigrants from Africa and Latin America, who face racial discrimination.

In carrying out the struggle for Basque self-determination, Basque freedom fighters set up an organization in 1959 known as ETA, an acronym for the Basque words meaning Basque Homeland and Freedom. ETA evolved into a guerrilla group that carried out armed actions against the Spanish state, both during the fascist period and afterwards.

The Spanish ruling class took the same approach toward ETA as the British rulers did toward the Irish Republican Army and the U.S. toward Puerto Rican patriots: repression. They hunted down ETA

members and also jailed thousands of Basques involved in political struggles.

This repression extended to pro-independence political organizations in the Basque Country. The “Law of the Parties” of 2002 outlawed Batasuna, the political party that shared the same political program as the guerrilla group ETA. After Batasuna was made illegal, the AVN (Basque Nationalist Action) was set up to politically represent Basque self-determination. The courts then outlawed AVN.

Thus in today’s Spanish state, Basques who are for independence or autonomy have no legal political party, while former fascist youth like Aznar can run the government.

II-SP supports self-determination

The II-SP supports self-determination for Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country. The leading figure on the II-SP ticket, world-famous playwright and historical anti-fascist elder Alfonso Sastre, also led the AVN ticket in a recent election before the AVN was banned. Number two on the II-SP slate, Doris Benegas from the Castilian Left, and number five, Ángeles Maestro of the Red Current, are leaders who have politically supported Basque self-determination. They participated in meetings supporting Basque political prisoners and honoring Basque martyrs.

As Maestro told the media, none of these candidates belongs to ETA, nor does the II-SP advocate armed struggle, nor are the candidates of Basque nationality. Yet the Spanish regime and courts have applied the “Law of Parties” to out-

law the II-SP from the election.

The state’s argument—if you can believe it—is that Basques who support Batasuna and who see Sastre heading the list might consider II-SP an indirect representative of Batasuna’s program. Pro-independence Basques might feel inspired by voting for II-SP and encouraged to continue the struggle and thus, the court reasoned, it must ban II-SP.

Continuing to fight for its place on the ballot, II-SP asks for support inside and outside Spain on a petition to defend “democracy and the presumption of innocence.” Already Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of Argentina has written to Zapatero urging him to “intervene” to “avoid anti-democratic actions” by the courts against II-SP.

Inside the Spanish state, other federal parties on the ballot like the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain (PCPE) and the Anti-capitalist Initiative (IA) have demanded that the ban on II-SP be lifted. The Basque Left denied it was manipulating II-SP and expressed solidarity with II-SP’s right to be on the ballot.

There are reports the IU is split on this question. So far the IU leadership has said only that it will support the decision of the courts in this matter.

Slanders from the rightist parties, the regime and the media against the militants of II-SP may prevent the election of the II-SP candidates, but even this hostile publicity has exposed many millions of people to this party’s existence and potentially its program at the beginning of an intense class struggle in the Spanish state.

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WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

People’s Economic Summit set for May 31

Continued from page 1

Sara Flounders, a co-coordinator of the International Action Center, one of the supporting organizations for the People’s Summit, said the big powers—the U.S. and the European Union especially—were trying to obstruct the U.N. meeting and boycott it. “They don’t want any input or control over their banking system,” she said. “They already know their system works against the interests of the overwhelming majority of the world’s population, but they don’t like to hear it at the U.N.”

“The crisis means disaster for hundreds of millions of people globally,” said Flounders. “We want to prevent the world’s powers from dividing the workers here from their sisters and brothers around the globe. Our movement here in the U.S. is in full solidarity with the June 1-3 conference and we are making demands upon the same powerful forces inside the U.S.,” she added.

“We are circulating a petition to support the U.N. conference, drafted by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark,” said Flounders. “People can sign onto it and get more information about the People’s Summit at the IAC website at www.iacenter.org.”

Along with the May 31 Summit and planning for the September G-20 protest, BOPM is supporting a People’s Summit & Tent City in Detroit on June 14-17 at the Grand Circus Park to protest the “National Big Business Summit” of the big corporation heads set at that time.

The brochure calling for the People’s Summit lists discussions on “Defending

Immigrant/Worker Rights,” “Building a Struggle of Youth and Students,” “Communities of Faith for Peace and Justice,” and “Capitalist Crisis, Racism, Political Repression and the Prisons.” Organizations that focus on one or another of these issues will be joining the panels to discuss them, making up panels of activists from labor, community, women’s, lesbian/gay/bi/trans, immigrant, religious, anti-imperialist and anti-war struggles, among others.

In addition, there will be a “People’s Speakout” in two parts that involves a discussion of strategy and tactics from those who have lost jobs, homes, healthcare and their future. One part is on “Workers’ Struggles in U.S.—The fight for jobs; the EFCA and against layoffs; growing unemployment; foreclosures; evictions.” The other is on “Struggles Against U.S. Corporate Power Around the World—Impact of capitalist crisis, militarism, environmental destruction and imperialist policies in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Caribbean and Latin America.”

Among the invited speakers—besides the U.N. delegates—are Cynthia McKinney, Ramsey Clark, Howard Zinn, Nawal El Saadawi, Medea Benjamin, Ajamu Sankofa, Vinie Burrows, Nellie Bailey, City Councilperson Charles Barron, Chris Silvera, Brenda Stokely, Larry Hamm, Lynne Stewart, Rev. Lucius Walker, Sonny Africa, Paul Quintos, Dulphing Ogan and Curtis Doebbler.

For more information on the schedule and the organizations involved, visit bailoutpeople.org. Also see ad on page 6.

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Paquistaníes denuncian la ofensiva de Zardari y del Pentágono

Por Deirdre Griswold
Nueva York

En el Hotel Roosevelt en el centro del ajetreado Manhattan el 10 de mayo, Asif Ali Zardari presidente de Pakistán, trataba de tranquilizar a unos 300 miembros de la comunidad expatriada diciendo que su reciente visita a Washington no significaba una capitulación a la presión estadounidense.

Pero afuera, una vigorosa manifestación denunciaba la sangrienta ofensiva del gobierno en el Valle Swat que ha causado que más de medio millón de paquistaníes huyan de sus hogares. A través de discursos y consignas en pastún y otras lenguas paquistaníes como también en inglés, la multitud paquistaní y sus simpatizantes norteamericanos/as arremetieron contra los bombardeos brutales de la Fuerza Aérea de Pakistán señalando que cada bomba y cada bala habían sido provistas por el Pentágono.

Cuando la reunión terminó en el hotel, emergió un grupo de paquistaníes vestidos/as más formalmente. Estaban furiosos/as con Zardari por haberle “rogado” a los Estados Unidos por dinero y por

haberse salido de la reunión antes de que hubieran podido hablar con él. Una docena se unió a la demostración y denunció al presidente de Pakistán ante la multitud y ante las cámaras.

En Washington el pasado 7 de mayo, Zardari prometió en una conferencia conjunta de prensa con el presidente afgani Hamid Karzai y los senadores estadounidenses John Kerry y Richard Lugar, que Pakistán continuará la ofensiva hasta que los “terroristas” sean derrotados.

El usó el lenguaje creado en Washington para describir a las fuerzas islámicas opuestas a la ocupación estadounidense en el vecino país de Afganistán. Para la gente que vive en las zonas fronterizas, los terroristas son sin embargo, aquellos que envían los aviones ‘Predator’ y ‘Raptor’ de control remoto que disparan misiles ‘Hellfire’ hacia sus casas y sus poblados. Por más de un año, estos aviones sin piloto enviados por el Pentágono, han traído muerte y sufrimiento a los poblados en el norte de Pakistán. Los generales y los medios de comunicación occidentales entonces declaran otra victoria contra el “terrorismo”.

La angustia que esto ha ocasionado estaba reflejada en los rostros de los diversos grupos de paquistaníes. Vinieron de varios grupos étnicos y expresaron distintos puntos de vista político y religioso, pero todos/as exigieron el fin a la injerencia extranjera en su país y el cese de la ofensiva militar.

Una nutrida delegación solidaria del Centro de Acción Internacional y del Partido Workers World/Mundo Obrero vino para apoyar la manifestación. Diferentes oradores/as subrayaron que el imperialismo estadounidense ha respaldado a una larga serie de dictaduras militares en Pakistán que ha dividido al país en una minoría altamente privilegiada contra una población empobrecida.

También se dirigieron a los/as transeúntes, señalando cómo los miles de millones de dólares gastados para hacer de Pakistán un aliado del Pentágono contribuyen al creciente empobrecimiento del pueblo en este país.

La manifestación fue convocada por el Foro de Liberación Pakistán-Estados Unidos, el cual ha trabajado incansablemente para organizar la comunidad contra la represión en su país. □

Afganistán y Guernica

LOS HECHOS: La fuerza aérea estadounidense bombardeó y disparó con poderosas ametralladoras contra aldeas en la provincia de Farah de Afganistán en la tarde y en la noche del 4 de mayo. El coronel Greg Julian, portavoz del ejército de EEUU en Kabul así lo admitió.

Rohul Amin, gobernador de la provincia le dijo al parlamento afgano que habían matado alrededor de 130 civiles, según Mohammad Naim Farahi, un miembro del parlamento. Él reportó que los sobrevivientes enterraron 113 cuerpos, incluyendo muchas mujeres y niños. Más adelante, más cuerpos fueron sacados de los escombros y algunas de las víctimas que habían sido llevadas al hospital murieron.

“El gobernador dijo que los aldeanos trajeron dos camiones remolcadores llenos de partes de cuerpos humanos a su oficina para probar que las muertes habían ocurrido”, dijo Farahi. “Todas las personas en la oficina del gobernador lloraban al ver esa escena impactante”.

Ghusuldin Agha, quien vive en el poblado de Granai en el distrito de Bala Baluk, dijo que el bombardeo comenzó a las 5 P.M. y duró hasta tarde en la noche. La “gente se apresuraba ir a casa de sus parientes donde creían que estarían seguras, pero les dispararon en el camino”. Había partes de cuerpos por todos lados.

Muhammad Jan, agricultor de la localidad, dijo: Las “mujeres y los niños habían buscado cobertura en huertos y en casas”. Los bombardeos destruyeron completamente las casas y la gente “todavía permanece debajo de los escombros. Ahora estoy trabajando con otros aldeanos intentando excavar los cadáveres”. Según un informe sobre esta atrocidad en el New York Times del 6 de mayo, los “aldeanos enloquecidos de dolor recogían los cuerpos destrozados en mantas y estolas y los ponían en tres camiones. Todavía faltaban personas”.

Jessica Barry, portavoz del Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja, reportó que entre las muertes estaba la de un voluntario de la Medialuna Roja Afgana y 13 de sus parientes.

LA MENTIRA: “Tenemos otra información que nos lleva a conclusiones diametralmente opuestas sobre lo que causó víctimas civiles”, dijo el comandante estadounidense en Afganistán, el general David D. McKiernan quien acaba de ser despedido por el presidente Obama.

Funcionarios del Departamento de la Defensa de los EEUU quienes no permitieron que sus nombres fueran divulgados, dijeron que habían investigadores mirando informes que decían que las personas afganas murieron por granadas lanzadas a los civiles por militantes del Talibán, y que los militantes después trasladaron los cuerpos alrededor de la aldea diciendo que los muertos eran víctimas de un ataque estadounidense.

“No podemos confirmar el informe de que el Talibán ejecutó a esta gente. ... No sabemos si es verdad y tampoco sabemos cuántos civiles murieron como resultado de esta operación”, dijo el capitán John Kirby, portavoz de la Junta de Jefes del Estado Mayor del Pentágono.

LA GRAN MENTIRA: La ciudad de Guernica, un símbolo histórico de la nación vasca, fue atacada por alemanes nazis y bombarderos italianos fascistas el 26 de abril de 1937, durante la guerra civil española, matando a 1.600 civiles. Los nazis alemanes apoyaban a los fascistas españoles que estaban conducidos por el general Francisco Franco. El artista mundialmente famoso Pablo Picasso representó esa masacre en su pintura “Guernica”, que ha mantenido la atrocidad fascista en la memoria de la gente.

Adolfo Hitler, el dictador nazi alemán, era muy conocido por el uso de las “Grandes Mentiras”, una represión fascista y brutal de la verdad. Franco, quien copió esta táctica, le echó la culpa de las muertes en Guernica a los vascos anti-fascistas y reprimió hasta su muerte en 1975, la verdad sobre la responsabilidad de los alemanes.

Hitler y el fascismo nacieron en un tiempo de crisis capitalista y de decadencia en las relaciones económicas. Entonces y ahora la realidad es un sistema capitalista decadente acompañado de un militarismo en expansión. Esta vez la gente está más interconectada globalmente y es más difícil cubrir los crímenes monstruosos y las mentiras flagrantes del Pentágono.

El problema está en cómo detenerlos. Es posible, y la lucha de los pueblos a nivel mundial para derrocar el complejo militar de los EEUU debe ocurrir aquí en las mismas entrañas del monstruo. □

Ejército estadounidense recluta niños de 13 años

Por Kermit Leibensperger
Filadelfia

Siete manifestantes fueron detenidos el 2 de mayo en el “Centro de Experiencia del Ejército” en la plaza comercial Franklin Mills en el norte de Filadelfia en la lucha contra el crimen de lesa humanidad más reciente de los Estados Unidos: el reclutamiento de jóvenes de 13 años. Este centro de reclutamiento del ejército fue cerrado exitosamente por más de una hora hasta que la policía hizo los arrestos. Antes de eso, más de 200 personas marcharon por las calles del cercano vecindario proletario y luego bloquearon la entrada del nuevo centro de juegos de video para el reclutamiento al ejército de jóvenes que costó más de \$12 millones.

Los/las manifestantes entregaron una querella por crimen al comandante en jefe del ejército (en la plaza) y a la gerencia de la plaza. La Plaza Franklin Mills es propiedad de Si-

mon Property Group, Inc., el dueño de distribuidores al por menor más grande del planeta. El Pentágono está en flagrante violación del tratado para impedir el reclutamiento militar de niños, el Protocolo Opcional sobre el Envolvimiento de Niños en Conflictos Armados, el cual el Senado estadounidense ratificó en 2002 junto a otras 124 naciones.

La máquina de propaganda de los Estados Unidos critica las luchas populares de liberación, como la de Palestina, por supuestamente usar a niños como luchadores. Y estas son luchas en las que el ejército opresor tiene como blanco a civiles, incluyendo a los/as niños/as. Aquí, donde el Pentágono está activamente reclutando a niños para el uso futuro como carne de cañón, no ha habido ninguna protesta significativa en los medios masivos.

El gobierno insidiosamente ha colocado simuladores de armas tecnológicamente avanzadas en la plaza cerca de la pista de patinar, de

la tienda de música y otros negocios que son frecuentados por jóvenes. Estos simuladores de sistemas de armamentos reales tienen enormes pantallas de cine que se pueden ver fácilmente a través de las ventanas de vidrio de veinte pies, atrayendo y atrapando a jóvenes pobres y de la clase trabajadora para la misión vil de matar a jóvenes en el Medio Oriente en beneficio de las compañías de petróleo.

Residentes de Filadelfia le dijeron a Workers World/Mundo Obrero que el enorme complejo en Franklin Mills es el prototipo del ejército. Otro establecimiento igual ha sido construido en Ohio, y hay muchos más proyectados. El objetivo de las varias docenas de jóvenes, veteranos, miembros/as de organizaciones religiosas, comunitarias, educativas e izquierdistas que participaron hoy es cerrar todos estos centros del ejército. Los/as organizadores/as prometieron tener manifestaciones aún más grandes. □

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Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Schwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando